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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 5 October 2010, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Monthe ..... (Cameroon)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 27: Social development (*continued*) (A/65/89, 307 and 336)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/65/168 and 174)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/65/173 and 393)

(c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/65/157 and 158)

(d) United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all (*continued*) (A/65/172)

1. **Ms. Aitimova** (Kazakhstan) said that her country believed that social development should remain the overriding priority during the ongoing crises. At a time when the global economic and financial architecture was being restructured, the social sphere was extremely vulnerable; hence the increasingly urgent need for concerted efforts by Member States and the United Nations system to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to implement the commitments made under other framework documents.

2. Many States had been forced to cut costs, including in the social sphere, which raised concerns about the possible deterioration of development indicators and other negative consequences in the long term. However, States should always take all possible measures to improve the well-being of their citizens; the President of Kazakhstan planned to double the gross domestic product and social expenditure, thereby raising the standard of living; consequently, the percentage of the national budget dedicated to social spending had been increased by nearly 20 per cent. The World Summit for Social Development had introduced an approach focused on social inclusion and the emphasis had since shifted towards disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Kazakhstan was committed to the concept of comprehensive recovery through the increased budget for the social sector and the State guarantee of adequate living conditions for all.

3. The global unemployment situation was a cause for concern; implementation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Global Jobs Pact and a social protection floor was therefore essential. The 2010-2014 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection was designed to establish decent work policies and ensure conditions for sustainable post-crisis economic development. In addition, legislative measures had been taken to improve the remuneration of employees in the education, health care and agricultural sectors. Population ageing was a new phenomenon in Kazakhstan but, under the Constitution, all citizens had the right to a minimum pension and social security in old age, sickness, disability or loss of the primary wage earner.

4. The converging crises would have a negative and long-lasting impact on the delivery of public health services and on health outcomes and had exacerbated the situation of the poorest and the most vulnerable worldwide. In 2009, Kazakhstan had implemented a national health protection code to improve health-care standards and increase medical services nationwide; the code also guaranteed free medical assistance and medicines for children and older persons. The economic crisis had impacted key determinants of health such as decent work, income, level of education, nutrition and housing. Kazakhstan called on Member States to maintain a stable and predictable social floor.

5. **Mr. Loayza Barea** (Bolivia) said that social inclusion was an important component of social development; thus, the Plurinational State of Bolivia had adopted the "living well" concept of its indigenous peoples as its development philosophy: complimentarily and solidarity in access to and enjoyment of natural resources in harmony with nature and other human beings. That philosophy had inspired the National Development Plan which aimed to create a dignified, democratic, productive and sovereign Bolivia.

6. Under that development model, the State assumed the role of guarantor of human rights and collective well-being. The new Constitution reaffirmed the human rights to life, food sovereignty, decent work, and universal access to water and sanitation among other basic services, which were not subject to concession or privatization. In that context, his Government had advocated the approval of General Assembly resolution 64/292 on the human right to water and sanitation and noted that the Human Rights Council had adopted a similar resolution recently.

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7. Bolivia offered free, universal health care to all its citizens; it had also adopted policies concerning the right to education and had finally eradicated illiteracy. South-South cooperation, through the "Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-People's Trade Treaty" (ALBA-TCP), had been a determining factor in that achievement.

8. Under the National Housing Plan, housing had been made available to the most vulnerable sectors of the population, which consisted of indigenous families for the most part. Moreover, following the agrarian reform law, deeds to community land had been granted for agricultural purposes, with priority being accorded to women.

9. Under the social inclusion policy, all forms of discrimination had been eliminated. The new Constitution accorded preferential treatment to persons with disabilities, to ensure that they could lead a decent life and develop their individual potential. In addition, it guaranteed the protection of young people and their active participation in the country's development process. Bolivia was addressing the demographic challenge of population ageing by adopting a national policy that ensured a decent life and a pension for all those over 60 years of age.

10. The recent global crises had imposed new challenges for building a more inclusive society. National efforts would have to be supplemented by increased international cooperation, technical assistance and technology transfer. The actions of the United Nations system were of vital importance to support national policies and help create the necessary conditions for compliance with the commitments and objectives defined at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen.

11. **Mr. Giorgio** (Eritrea) said that, although the world was interdependent and interconnected, each country faced specific challenges to achieve its goals. Hence, Governments needed to be able to develop initiatives and strategies that reflected country-specific conditions and priorities. While increased cooperation and solidarity were required at all levels, Governments had to remain focused on and committed to attaining sustained social progress.

12. Eritrea's social policy was informed by social justice and social cohesion, and its actions were guided by social inclusion and equality, with particular emphasis on rural areas. The country's youth were benefiting from an expanded and upgraded educational system and other social services, but they were also acting as agents of change, actively engaged in the development of Eritrea's economic, social and physical infrastructure. Furthermore, they were playing a part in the national effort to address the root causes of poverty and underdevelopment.

13. Eritrea was one of the four African countries on track to achieving some of the Millennium Development Goals, such as reducing maternal and child mortality, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and the mortality and morbidity of malaria-related diseases. Furthermore, life expectancy had recently increased by nearly eight years. However, significant challenges remained and Eritrea had elaborated a five-year development plan to eradicate poverty, to accelerate access to education, health care, job opportunities and social security, and to promote social solidarity and harmony among different ethnic groups. In addition, a comprehensive policy was in place to ensure the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

14. The key to moving the socio-economic agenda forward was to remain fully committed to the established goals by enhancing coordination and cooperation at all levels, including among the members of the United Nations system.

15. **Ms. Sow** (Senegal) said that climate change and the global economic crisis had particularly affected developing countries in Africa, and had cancelled out recent efforts made by the poorest countries, jeopardizing their possibilities of achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. It was therefore vital that the international community undertake vigorous measures to provide appropriate solutions.

16. Senegal had adopted ambitious policies to improve the welfare of children, women, older persons and persons with disabilities and to include them in the national sustainable development process. However, the challenges of social inclusion, poverty elimination and full employment remained the principal barriers to social development. Measures had been taken to combat gender-based discrimination so as to allow women to play an effective role in decision-making and the development process at the community and the national levels.

17. The strategic plan for poverty reduction was designed to improve the living conditions of vulnerable

groups by enhancing the formal social security system. For the first time disaster management had been included as a component of sustainable development, which reflected Senegal's political will to reduce the impact of disasters, especially on the most vulnerable groups.

18. In the context of the Millennium Development Goals, Senegal was endeavouring to expand health insurance to half its population and had taken measures to reduce child and maternal mortality. A participatory process had been initiated to elaborate a poverty reduction strategy based on redistributing the benefits of economic growth and satisfying the people's basic needs. The initiative highlighted the need to mobilize all stakeholders to combat poverty and exclusion by establishing a close relationship between poverty reduction, economic progress and capacity-building. Moreover, Senegal had placed young people at the centre of the development process by making access to education an absolute priority.

19. The national social inclusion strategy was based on the notion that development was not merely the accumulation of wealth and human capital, but also the prevention of the most important risks that forced some sectors of the population into poverty and prevented the poorest from escaping the cycle of chronic poverty.

20. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh) said that Bangladesh faced a significant challenge to ensure education for all because it was one of the nine countries where 54 per cent of the world's total population and 67 per cent of the world's non-literate youth and adults lived. Nevertheless, the adult literacy rate had increased by almost 20 per cent from 1985 to 2007 as a result of multifaceted actions taken to accelerate the provision of primary and mass education. The net school enrolment rate at the primary level was over 90 per cent, owing to various incentive programmes and, in 2006, Bangladesh had achieved the Millennium Development Goal target of gender parity at the secondary level.

21. A food for education programme introduced in 1993 to compensate poor parents for sending their children to school had increased enrolment, as well as helping to reduce child labour. The programme was later transformed into a stipend programme that was currently planned to cover 60 per cent of enrolled students. The Government had also introduced the Second Primary Education Development Programme to ensure that every child had access to the minimum inputs required for an acceptable quality of primary schooling. Additionally, non-formal primary education had become a success story in Bangladesh owing to collaboration between government and non-governmental organizations.

22. In an effort to eradicate illiteracy from poor households, another programme provided children in poverty-stricken districts with a light midday meal, however, it was difficult to expand coverage due to lack of funding. Therefore, Bangladesh again urged the developed countries to fulfil their commitment to contribute 0.7 per cent of their gross national income (GNI) to official development assistance (ODA). Aware that education provided the highest return on any investment, the Government's target was to attain 100 per cent primary school enrolment by 2011 and 100 per cent literacy by 2014; nevertheless, donor support was required in order to accomplish those goals.

23. **Ms. Kenewendo** (Botswana), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the major challenges facing the youth of Botswana included high levels of poverty and unemployment, a deficit of technical skills, lack of participation in decision-making, crime and alcohol abuse. However, since youth represented nearly 40 per cent of the population, resolving those problems meant addressing system-wide issues.

24. Young people recognized the importance of private-sector-led growth and diversification as a viable long-term economic strategy and had a leading role to play in achieving those goals. Moreover, although globalization had substantially changed the job market, youth capacity-building together with enhanced collaboration with the private sector and civil society could lead to more sustainable growth and increased youth employment.

25. In Botswana, the political will to respond to the needs of youth was revealed by a National Youth Policy that addressed issues of youth development and empowerment, and provided significant budgetary allocations for health and education, and a Youth Development Fund for youth enterprises. Young people in Botswana were interested in youth economic empowerment partnerships, mentoring and private micro-enterprises; youth community-based projects; establishment and equipping of business clinics, and also peer counselling projects to reinforce training; consequently, they appreciated programmes such as the

Youth Employment Network. Nevertheless, such opportunities alone would not solve their problems. Social ills such as alcohol and drug abuse, violence and crime hindered social development and Member States were urged to take steps to deal with juvenile delinquency and help curb abuse by introducing effective rehabilitation schemes. Youth participation in the General Assembly led to better policy responses to the problems facing youth and strengthened communication and cooperation between Governments and young people.

26. **Ms. Stewart** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that every two years since 2004, ILO had been publishing comprehensive data and analyses concerning the global labour market trends for youth. In 2008, 152 million young people who worked, or 28 per cent of all young workers, were unable to earn enough to lift themselves and their families out of extreme poverty and, currently, poverty rates among young workers exceeded those of adults.

27. The financial and economic crisis had driven youth unemployment to unprecedented heights and past experience suggested that, in the absence of urgent action, the recovery in the youth labour market could be protracted. ILO advocated continued labour market interventions and, in 2009, its member States had signed the Global Jobs Pact. The pact included the pledge to take measures to prevent the crisis from having an impact on the young labour force, such as providing employment subsidies for hiring young people, financing skills development programmes to enhance the employability of disadvantaged youth, expanding public employment services and income support measures.

28. Demographic transition and its implications for employment and social protection remained high on the ILO agenda. By 2050, 2 billion people would be aged 60 years or older, 80 per cent of them in developing countries. Since population ageing was inevitable, the right policy measures for the labour market and social transfer systems needed to be put in place. The United Nations had recognized the importance of ensuring social protection for all and the social protection floor promoted access to essential social security transfers and social services, with particular attention to vulnerable groups. The Social Protection Floor Advisory Group had been created recently to provide general guidance, catalyse policy coherence, promote the sharing of experiences, and contribute to exchanges and cooperation.

29. The absence of effective measures for reconciling work and family responsibilities compromised development. In that regard, the services provided by domestic workers had become indispensable. In June 2010, the International Labour Conference had adopted landmark conclusions on decent work for such workers and had decided to hold further discussion on the topic in 2011 with a view to adopting new international labour standards.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.